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From the Editor: Diversity of Engagement Scholarship Demonstrated

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Diversity of Engagement Scholarship Demonstrated

Once again I welcome the opportunity to share with you some of the most impressive engagement scholarship research around. Whether a community partner, student, or university representative, there is something in this issue of *JCES* that will resonate with you. I guarantee it. Review of the manuscripts in this issue caused me to pause and reflect on the array of social issues with which we as a society are presented and their relationships to engagement scholarship. While I am still reflecting on this, and will for a while, I did conclude that one of the primary benefits for me of being involved in engagement scholarship is that the work fulfills so many aspects of my life. The connections that are easy to see are how engagement scholarship connects with me in my professional, academic, and scholarly roles. What might not be as apparent to some is how engagement scholarship helps me fulfill that humanitarian part of me that has a responsibility to contribute to society in a positive way. I find that most people would like to have their lives matter. Most people would like to know that their having lived somehow made a difference in the world. Engagement scholarship provides one mechanism through which that can be done. Engagement scholarship has the potential to change lives for the better, improve quality of life, have unheard voices heard, and yes, possibly change the world, no matter how small. Despite its relatively new position in the research arena, engagement scholarship is well positioned to do these things.

The current issue of *JCES* is reflective of these possibilities. This issue has diversity in a variety of ways, including methodology, thought, purpose, participants, and geography to name a few. One longitudinal, qualitative study examines community-university relationships developed through, relationship education, while another addresses community-university partnerships within the context of a survey study and recognition of the inter-professional nature of such collaborations. From the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua to South Alaska and throughout the United States, this issue confirms that *JCES* recognizes the importance of community engagement within an international context. Also included in this issue are manuscripts that examine innovative ways for addressing community health through engagement scholarship.

One project reports on the use of spoken word, a form of performance poetry, to address HIV/AIDS and another discusses the use of “girl power” photovoice to address relevant health in communities. Several of the manuscripts focus on lessons learned, providing valuable insight on diverse aspects of engagement scholarship. Recognizing the importance of service learning to engagement scholarship, we include several manuscripts reporting on service learning efforts. I would also like to highlight that many of the manuscripts in this issue appropriately give particular attention to the cultural aspects of relevant communities and community partners. Given the importance of community partners to engagement scholarship, cultural (widely defined) nuances must be given attention to across all levels of the process, ideally from inception to dissemination, when possible. I was especially pleased to see this attention to culture highlighted in many of the manuscripts in this issue, along with the elevation of the role and levels of involvement of community partners.

As always, we look forward to receiving your feedback. What you have to say is important and will be valuable to *JCES* going forward. Please feel free to contact me at jces@ua.edu.